

FROM VET SCHOOL TO A WISCONSIN DAIRY FARM

Arkansas Native Bringing Animal Health to Iraq's Livestock Industry

(Baghdad, Iraq) -- Dr. Deanna Brown graduated from Mississippi State University's, School of Veterinary Medicine and even worked on a Wisconsin dairy farm.

But in 1991, Dr. Brown the rolling fields and the early morning milking on her dairy farm and joined the U.S. Army.

Now, Lieutenant Colonel Deanna Brown is working to improve veterinary training and helping Iraqis focus on large animal health.



The Little Rock, Arkansas native is stationed at Fort Bragg in North Carolina. Brown recently conducted a veterinary workshop in Erbil.

"This was a capacity building workshop," said Brown. "There were about 90 veterinarians from throughout Iraq from the different levels of government."

The emphasis of this program is livestock such as sheep, cattle, poultry and goats.



There are numerous challenges and issues facing Iraqi veterinarians as they seek to improve animal health.

According to Brown, "They have many significant diseases, such as foot and mouth disease, and they have an infrastructure that has not allowed them to develop good over-arching programs to allow them to control these diseases."

Ironically though, Iraqi veterinarians found themselves on the front lines in the battle against H5N1, avian influenza. Veterinarians instituted an aggressive culling program to contain the influenza before it had a major impact on Iraq's poultry industry.

American taxpayer dollars and expertise has led to the development of an inter-agency working group of veterinarians from different organizations including the U.S. military, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Colorado State University, and the Universities of Kentucky and Georgia. Along with the American Veterinary Association, this group is trying to help Iraqi veterinarians create a sustainable national plan for animal health.

Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns announced a plan to utilize the American agriculture extension system in order to establish direct links with Iraqi farmers.

Photos and story by Paul McKellips, U.S. Department of State, Public Affairs GO Team, on assignment in Iraq.

